

Demystifying Outreach to Reservation Communities: Communication Processes and Decision Making in Tribal/Rural Communities

2006 Community Involvement Conference
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

June 28, 2006

ru ral

adj.

- 1. Of, relating to, or characteristic of the country.
- 2. Of or relating to people who live in the country: *rural households*.
- 3. Of or relating to farming; agricultural.

[Middle English, from Old French, from Latin *r r lis*, from *r s*, *r r-*, *country*. See *reu* - in Indo-European Roots.]

Native American

n.

- A member of any of the indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere.
 - Any member of the peoples living in North or South America before the Europeans arrived.
 - *adj.* of or pertaining to American Indians or their culture or languages
-

Native American

n.

- **Usage Note:** Many Americans have come to prefer *Native American* over *Indian* both as a term of respect and as a corrective to the famous misnomer bestowed on the peoples of the Americas by a geographically befuddled Columbus. There are solid arguments for this preference. *Native American* eliminates any confusion between indigenous American peoples and the inhabitants of India, making it the clear choice in many official contexts. It is also historically accurate, despite the insistence by some that Indians are no more native to America than anyone else since their ancestors are assumed to have migrated here from Asia. But one sense of *native* is “being a member of the original inhabitants of a particular place,” and Native Americans’ claim to being the original inhabitants of the Americas is unchallenged. ·Accuracy and precision aside, however, the choice between these two terms is often made as a matter of principle. For many, *Native American* is the only choice for expressing respect toward America’s indigenous peoples; *Indian* is seen as wrong and offensive. For others, the former smacks of bureaucracy and the manipulation of language for political purposes while the latter is the natural English term, its inaptness made irrelevant by long use. Fortunately, this controversy appears to have subsided somewhat in recent years, and it is now common to find the two terms used interchangeably in the same piece of writing. Furthermore, the issue has never been particularly divisive between Indians and non-Indians. While generally welcoming the respectful tone of *Native American*, most Indian writers have continued to use the older name at least as often as the newer one. ·*Native American* and *Indian* are not exact equivalents when referring to the aboriginal peoples of Canada and Alaska. *Native American*, the broader term, is properly used of all such peoples, whereas *Indian* is customarily used of the northern Athabaskan and Algonquian peoples in contrast to the Eskimos, Inuits, and Aleuts. *Alaska Native* (or less commonly *Native Alaskan*) is also properly used of all indigenous peoples residing in Alaska. See Usage Note at [American Indian](#). See Usage Note at [First Nation](#). See Usage Note at [Indian](#).
-

Native American

n.

■ Synonyms:

- ❑ American Indian
 - ❑ Amerind
 - ❑ Amerindian
 - ❑ Amerindic
 - ❑ First Nation
 - ❑ Indian
 - ❑ Indigenous American
-

The numbers game

■ National Rural Numbers

- ❑ 25% of Americans defined as rural residents
- ❑ Yet, 97.5% of the total U.S. land area is rural

■ National Native American Numbers

- ❑ Less than 1% of population (2,475,956 in 2004)
 - ❑ Less than 3% of land base
 - ❑ 562 federally recognized tribes nationwide
-

The numbers game

- California, Oklahoma and Arizona have the three largest populations of Native Americans

	<u>California</u>	<u>Oklahoma</u>	<u>Arizona</u>
American Indian/Alaska Native Population	333,511	273,230	255,879
Percentage of Overall Population	1%	7.9%	5%
Percentage of Tribal Land	4%	10%	28%
Federally Recognized Tribes	106	37	22

History isn't a thing of the past

- History is contemporary
 - Things that happened in the yesteryears are very real and vital today
 - Accountable for promises made by predecessors
 - Distrust for government

Tribal considerations & EJ

- Native Americans are ranked lowest in socio-economic categories, including health, poverty-levels, life-span, etc.
 - Native American interests are not limited to tribal lands.
 - Tribal communities are just as dynamic as other groups of people.
 - There are pockets of urban Indians in American cities who have even more unique circumstances.
-

Overcoming the barriers

- Establishing trust and rapport is the key to success
 - Hands-on approach
 - Face-to-face interaction
- Be cognizant
 - Listen and understand
 - Don't sell or make hollow promises

Understanding the communication process

- Holistic decision-making
- Egalitarianism
- Reaching consensus

Keep in mind

- Suspicion of outsiders
 - ❑ Overcome the big city mentality
 - ❑ Earn trust
 - ❑ Dress casually
 - ❑ Shop locally
- Cultural practices
 - ❑ Time urgency
 - ❑ Interpretation
 - ❑ Photography

Keep in mind

- The “wild west” mentality
 - Irreverent humor
- Tribal governments as sovereign
 - Same respect as other elected officials
 - Multiple layers of government function
 - More comfortable with federal than state, counties or municipalities

Keep in mind

■ Media

- ❑ Radio is huge
 - ❑ Newspapers work, but most are weeklies
 - ❑ Local TV is almost non-existent
 - ❑ Community centers
 - ❑ Fliers are key
-

Demystifying Outreach to Reservation Communities: Communication Processes and Decision Making in Tribal/Rural Communities

2006 Community Involvement Conference
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

June 28, 2006